How to Tell Children's Stories Well – Settings and Props

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A Few Do's and Don'ts

- Do not talk down to the children
- Do not tell the story in a boring way
- Never, ever tell the "moral" of the story

A Few Do's and Don'ts

- Do tell the story with enthusiasm
- Do become the characters in the story
- Do involve the children in the story
- Do tell the story slowly enough that all can follow

How Do You Do That?

- Find your story and analyze it
- Imagine what it would be like to be the characters – think of their emotions, their words, their facial expressions
- In story telling a certain amount of exaggeration is acceptable

How Do You Do That?

- Be true to the story, especially if it is a Bible story
- All dialogue should be consistent with the story as found in Scripture
- Practice the story, think of what you will say and how you will say it

Settings Definition

- Settings are the places in time, space and culture where a story takes place.

Props

- Props are the moveable objects in a story.

Settings and Props in Biblical Stories

- Biblical stories are very laconic. They give the barest of details to create a picture in the mind.
- Any props in the story are always important.

Settings in Today's Story

- The setting in space in today's story is presumed to be "home" because the children play in the pantry.
- The time is presumed to be "now" because the story describes a typical home scene in an American home.

Props in Today's Story

- The central prop (and problem!) is a bean in Bobby's nose
- But there are other props as well.

Props in Today's Story

- Other beans
- The sharp knife
- Mommy's tweezers
- Mommy's purse and checkbook
- The doctor's special tool
- The ice cream

The Role of Settings

- Settings are the stage on which the actions take place
- They can be broad and expansive or close and intimate, or somewhere in between

The Role of Settings

- Settings limit the way we think of a story, limiting thoughts and ideas that are incompatible with the point of the story.

The Role of Settings

- We would not think it appropriate, for example, for today's story to occur on the top of a mountain.
- It needs to be in a home, and specifically in a pantry.

The Role of Props

- Props are the tools that the characters use to further their role in the story.
- Props can either help achieve a goal or can stand in the way of that achievement.
- In today's story, the bean in Bobby's nose was the central problem.

The Role of Props

- But props can also be the means of resolving a problem.
- The doctor's instrument took the bean out of Bobby's nose.
- Props often become key components in the plot of a story.

Your Settings and Props

- Identify the settings and props in your story.
- Determine what role they play for the characters and for the plot of your story.
- How does this information help you in storytelling?